

VZCZCXRO1263

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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 311340Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7760
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEATRS/DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS PARIS 002269

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EFIN ECON IBRD FR
SUBJECT: FRANCE SUPPORTIVE OF ZOELLICK NOMINATION

REF: STATE 73691

¶11. (SBU) The Charge raised reftel points on nomination of Robert Zoellick as World Bank president with GOF Treasury Director Xavier Musca on May 30. Musca said that France was likely to support the nomination, and referred to remarks made by Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner earlier in the day on the margins of the G8 foreign ministers meeting in Potsdam. Reuters quoted Kouchner as saying "certainly" in response to a question on whether Zoellick was the right man for the job.

¶12. (SBU) MFA DAS-equivalent for International Financial Affairs Cyrille Pierre told us separately that the press had slightly misinterpreted Kouchner. The Foreign Minister (as subsequently clarified by an MFA spokesperson) had said that "if Zoellick is nominated, I wish him the best of luck." Pierre said that pending the formal announcement the MFA was sensitive about not getting out in front of internal USG deliberations. Pierre said that France had a favorable view of Zoellick and said it would be important that the nominating and approval process moved forward in a completely transparent fashion to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders.

STAPLETON